Tracing Your Roots: Genealogical Resources in the Boston and Cambridge Area

Genealogical Materials at the Cambridge Public Library

If your ancestors were Cambridge residents, you can begin your search for information about them here at the Cambridge Public Library. We are not a genealogical research center, but we have some materials that may be useful. To do a thorough search you will want to follow the leads you get here by using the other resources in the Cambridge and Boston area.

IN THE REFERENCE ROOM

MICROFILM

Cambridge City Directories on microfilm for the years 1847-1972 (with gaps) and street listings from 1972 -1990. The directories list residents in alphabetical order, with addresses, occupations, and family members. Microfilm reader/printing machines are available in the Reference Room.

The Cambridge Chronicle on microfilm for the years 1846 to the present contains birth, death, and marriage announcements of some Cambridge residents and is indexed beginning with 1967. A separate obituary index beginning with 1985 is also available.

Vital records of Cambridge, Massachusetts to the year 1850 comp. by Thomas W. Baldwin – in print and on microfilm.

Cambridge tax lists 1837-1889, and police listings 1930-1974.

DATABASES

HeritageOuest Online

HeritageQuest Online includes all of the images, and extensive indexing from the 1790 - 1930 U.S. federal censuses. It offers more than 20,000 book titles, including nearly 8,000 family histories and over 12,000 local histories. Additionally, there are more than 250 primary-source documents such as tax lists, city directories, probate records, and more.

Ancestry Library Edition

The Ancestry Library Edition collection has approximately 4,000 databases including key collections such as U.S. Federal Census images and indexes from 1790 to 1930; the Map Center containing more than 1,000 historical maps; American Genealogical Biographical Index (over 200 volumes); Daughters of the American Revolution Lineage (over 150 volumes); The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1630; Social

Security Death Index (updated monthly); WWI Draft Registration Cards; Federal Slave Narratives; and a strong Civil War collection.

OTHER RESOURCES IN THE BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE AREA

Greater Boston has rich and varied resources available to the beginning genealogist. Below is a list of places to search, with addresses, business hours, and notes to give you an idea of what information may be found in each place. Write or phone for fee schedules. Generally searchers may do their own research for free. Good hunting!

Cambridge City Clerk 795 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge, MA 02139 http://www.cambridgema.gov/CityClrk

Phone: (617) 349-4260

Hours: Monday 8:30 am - 8 pm, Tuesday - Thursday 8:30 am - 5 pm, Friday 8:30 am -

noon

The City Clerk will search city records for Cambridge births, deaths, and marriages dating back to 1635. Write or phone for fee schedules.

Massachusetts Registry of Vital Records and Statistics 150 Mount Vernon St. 1st Floor Dorchester, MA 02125-3105 http://www.mass.gov/dph/rvrs

Phone: (617) 740-2600 Fax: 1-866-881-9699

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:45 am - 4:45 pm

The state Registry contains records of births, marriages, and deaths from 1916 to the present. There is an index for divorces from 1952 to the present.

Massachusetts Archives at Columbia Point 220 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125
http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcgen/genidx.htm

Phone: (617) 727-2816 Fax: (617) 288-8429

Hours: Monday – Friday 9 am - 5 pm and typically the second and fourth Saturdays of

each month, 9 am to 3 pm.

The state Archives contain vital statistics from 1841-1910, early census records, early tax records, Port of Boston passenger lists, and some early land, military, and court records.

For vital statistics prior to 1841, contact individual city or town clerks. Please call or see website for more details.

National Archives - New England Region 380 Trapelo Rd.
Waltham, MA 02452-6399
http://www.archives.gov/northeast

Phone: (781) 663-0130 Fax: (781) 663-0154

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 7 am - 4:30 pm, Thursday 7 am - 9 pm

Open some Saturdays, please call or check website for dates.

The National Archives contain United States census records, 1790-1930, naturalization records, passenger arrival lists (New England ports only), some Revolutionary War military and pension records, and access by microfilm to the holdings of the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

Probate and Family Court Department Middlesex County Division 208 Cambridge Street P.O. Box 410480 Cambridge, MA 02141 http://www.mass.gov/courts

Phone: (617) 768-5800

Hours: Monday – Friday 8 am – 4:30 pm

Suffolk Probate and Family Court P.O. Box 9667 24 New Chardon Street, 3rd Floor Boston, MA 02114 http://www.mass.gov/courts

Phone: (617) 788-8300

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

The courts maintain records of all wills probated in Middlesex and Suffolk Counties. Searchers must do their own research; the courts do not answer phone or mail inquiries.

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds Middlesex County Courthouse 208 Cambridge Street Cambridge, MA 02141 http://www.cambridgedeeds.com Phone: (617) 679-6310

Hours: Monday – Friday 8 am - 4 pm Suffolk County Registry of Deeds Edward W. Brooke Courthouse 24 New Chardon Street P.O. Box 9660 Boston, MA 02114-9660 http://www.suffolkdeeds.com

Phone: (617) 788-8575

Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 4:45 pm

The registries of deeds maintain all land ownership records for Middlesex and Suffolk Counties. Searchers must do their own research; the registries do not answer phone or main inquiries.

Boston Public Library
Genealogy and Family History Resources
Social Sciences Department
McKim Building, 2nd Floor
666 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
http://www.bpl.org/research/socsci/genealogy.htm

Phone: (617) 536-5400, ext. 2261

Hours: Monday – Thursday 9am -9pm, Friday - Saturday 9-5 Sunday 1-5 (Oct. - May)

The Boston Public Library contains extensive collections of materials of interest to the genealogical researcher, and because of its large holdings, the collection is not limited to one physical area. Materials can be found throughout the Research Library (i.e. McKim Building). Primary locations are Microtext, Social Sciences and the Research Library stacks, although staff may refer patrons to other subject departments as well. All materials are required to be used within the Research Library. Please call or see website for more information.

State Library of Massachusetts State House Rm. 341 Beacon Street Boston, MA 02133 http://www.mass.gov/lib/

Phone: (617) 727-2590

Hours: Monday – Friday 9 am - 5 pm

For information on the holdings of the State Library, please call or consult their web page.

New England Historic Genealogical Society 101 Newbury Street Boston, MA 02116 http://www.newenglandancestors.org/

Phone: (617) 536-5740

Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday 9 am - 5 pm Wednesday, 9am -9pm

Closed Sunday and Monday

Admission to the Research Library is free for NEHGS members. Research memberships, non-members (including seniors and students) and members at the subscription level will be charged a \$15 day fee.

For information on the holdings of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, please call or consult their web page.

Family History Center - Cambridge 2 Longfellow Park Cambridge, MA

Phone: 617-491-4749

Hours: Wednesday, 6pm-9pm; Sat 9am-1pm

Family History Centers are branch facilities of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. Centers provide access to most of the microfilms and microfiche in the Family History Library to help patrons identify their ancestors. Most centers are located in meetinghouses of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Centers are administered and operated by local Church members. Everyone is welcome to come to the centers and use Family History Center resources.

Web Sites

www.cyndislist.com (excellent site with many useful links)

www.rootsweb.com/~magenweb/

http://www.familysearch.org/

BOOKS

In recent months, we have added several new editions and new titles to the reference collection. Here are some books you may find helpful.

Ancestral Trails Ancestry's Red Book Directory of Family Associations Family Tree Problem Solver Finding Italian Roots	R929.1 H414an R929.1 An21 R929.2 B446di R929.1 R494fa R929.1 C689f
From Generation to Generation	R929.1 K967fr
Genealogist Guide to Discovering your Irish Ancestors	R929.1 R118ge
Genealogist's Address Book	R929.1 G286be
Genealogy Handbook	R929.1 G132ge
Genealogy Online for Dummies	929.1 H369ge
Genealogy Sourcebook	929.1 C21g
International Vital Records Handbook	R929.1 K32i
Plugging into Your Past	R929.1 C888pl
Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy	R929.1 So841
Sourcebook for Genealogical Research	R929.1 St62s
They Came in Ships	R929.1 C689th
Tracing your Irish Ancestors	R929.1 G865tr
Your Guide to the Family History Library	R929.1 W254yo

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